

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 002494

SIPDIS

USEU FOR MEZNAR, USUN FOR MALY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [UNHCR](#)

SUBJECT: UNHCR: EXCOM CABLE #3: IDP OVERVIEW

1.(U) Summary. The invigorated UN Collaborative Approach to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and UNHCR's enhanced role in the new approach were of key interest during UNHCR's Executive Committee (EXCOM) meetings the week of October 3-7.

A panel discussion devoted to the issue took place on October 3, and the proposal to designate UNHCR the "cluster lead" on protection, camp management and coordination, and emergency shelter was addressed by EXCOM special guest SYG Kofi Annan, UN ERC Jan Egeland, High Commissioner Guterres, and many EXCOM delegations. EXCOM delegations generally recognized the need to better address IDP situations, and expressed appreciation for efforts made to bring greater clarity to the UN response to IDPs. Delegations appears prepared for UNHCR to take on the three cluster leads, though many questions remain that need to be addressed as the process moves forward. End Summary.

2.(U) Members of the UN Interagency Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have been working on strengthening the UN response to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and have settled on an approach where a certain UN agency will take the lead in each of eight sectors where particular gaps exist. Further details of the plan are being worked out in the IASC; in the mean time though UNHCR has begun engaging EXCOM members on its proposed new role. Among other things, the plan calls for UNHCR to take the lead in three sectors: protection, camp management and coordination, and emergency shelter. As part of UNHCR's efforts to engage its Executive Committee on the issue, a panel discussion on the topic was held October 3. Panel participants included UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Jan Egeland; UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres; and DRC Minister of Interior, Decentralization, and Security, Mr. Mbemba Fundu.

3.(U) In his presentation, Egeland laid out three goals of the invigorated Collaborative Approach: 1) strengthening response capacity at the local, national and international level; 2) making funding more predictable; and 3) improving coordination. Being a sector lead, said Egeland, means "coordinating with others" (not "coordinating others"), building local and national capacities so they can carry out the majority of the IDP work, assessing the level of sector response, providing assistance, and serving as a provider of "last resort". Without offering specifics, he asserted that the new approach would be more cost effective.

4.(U) The IASC, which meets again on December 12, will decide initially on two or three pilot countries. (Note: USDel learned subsequently that the DRC, Liberia, and northern Uganda were being considered for the pilot countries.) The new program and revised UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) could then be launched on January 1. To assist IDPs "we absolutely must have additional resources, otherwise it won't happen", said Egeland. His goal is to get \$500 million committed to the CERF to be used as grants and loans.

He indicated that the UK, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Norway have committed to support the CERF, and that some \$170 million had already been pledged towards this effort.

5.(U) "UNHCR is one of the key partners in the approach", said Egeland, and "the Red Cross has a role too." He added that the entire international community has a responsibility to speak up regarding IDP situations, that stronger political support should accompany humanitarian efforts, and that solutions to the root causes of displacement need to be found. Egeland urged those present to help ensure the invigorated Collaborative Approach gets off to a strong start.

6.(U) UNHCR's High Commissioner Antonio Guterres said UNHCR must be a predictable partner on IDPs, while acknowledging that being a sector lead did not mean covering all needs within that sector, but rather working to ensure they are met by some entity. UNHCR's increased involvement would not result in staff increases in headquarters, but could in the field. OCHA, PROCAP proposal could be tapped by UNHCR to identify short-term, mid-level protection staff.

7.(U) DRC Minister Fundu said his country would serve as an ideal pilot. The IASC has yet to decide on pilot countries, but Egeland acknowledged the DRC is a good candidate. Ugandan Minister Ali made a pitch to serve as a pilot as well. Guterres opined that emergencies that are not working

well should be selected as pilots.

8.(U) Delegations expressed appreciation to the ERC, the OCHA/IDD unit, and the IASC for their efforts in bringing renewed energy to addressing the needs of IDPs, whom many acknowledged are among the most vulnerable people in the world. EXCOM members generally supported UNHCR's role as sector lead for protection, camp management coordination, and emergency shelter.

9.(U) Despite general support from EXCOM members, some delegations continue to have considerable questions. Australia, USDel, and others noted concern about financial and human resource implications. Australia warned against excessive emphasis on the CERF, vice other possible funding mechanisms. Guterres said UNHCR's increased involvement in IDPs would not lead to a bifurcated organization, nor undermine its "sacred" refugee work. Various countries, particularly those with IDP populations, said the UN should only assist IDPs when governments invite the UN in. The UK was notably positive about the new proposal, calling for rapid implementation. Guterres committed to ongoing dialogue with EXCOM on the issue.

10.(U) In a statement delivered to EXCOM by SYG Kofi Annan on October 6, Annan highlighted "accomplishments" of the September UNGA high-level event, including progress made to better address the needs of IDPs. He committed to completing the reinvigoration of the Collaborative Approach. Annan noted the important role UNHCR will play in this and the support expressed during the high-level event for the revised CERF. He said pledges to date exceeded \$150 million, which did not necessarily contradict the figure provided by Egeland earlier in the week. Annan touted the establishment of the Peace Building Commission as well, saying its goal is to help ensure that peace takes lasting hold in countries emerging from conflict. The Commission will help protect against genocide, and crimes against humanity. Annan noted that returning refugees have a role in advancing peace and stability, as does UNHCR.

11.(U) Comment. In the General Conclusion on International Protection, EXCOM members took note of the IASC deliberations and encouraged UNHCR to continue to explore the feasibility of taking on some coordination responsibilities. However, they did not give the explicit endorsement of the process or UNHCR's lead for which some in the UN were hoping. USDel's discussions with various UNHCR officials reveal continued confusion about what exactly taking on these sector leads means, where and when this will be implemented, and how the organization will resource these new activities. There is not much time before the IASC's December meeting during which these sector leads are meant to be finalized. It seems clear that UNHCR believes it has sufficient support to initiate at least pilot leads. The U.S. must continue to stress that the collaborative approach failed because important issues about funding, resources, priorities, and accountability were never resolved. Unless these same issues are addressed before the cluster leads are launched, the "new" approach is likely to face the same old problems. End Comment.

Cassel